

CLAIMS

1. A motorcycle comprising:
a frame including a forward portion, a rearward portion positioned rearwardly of the forward portion, and a backbone portion between the forward and rearward portions;
a fuel tank including a top wall, side walls extending generally downwardly from the top wall, bottom walls extending from the side walls generally toward one another, and a tunnel wall extending between the bottom walls and defining a concave tunnel portion of the fuel tank, the backbone portion of the frame being positioned in the tunnel portion; and
a mounting bracket coupled to and extending along the tunnel wall, the mounting bracket including a forward mounting portion coupled to the forward portion of the frame, and a rearward mounting portion coupled to the rearward portion of the frame to secure the fuel tank to the motorcycle.
2. The motorcycle of claim 1, wherein the forward mounting portion extends forwardly of the fuel tank.
3. The motorcycle of claim 2, wherein the forward mounting portion includes a pair of forwardly extending tabs coupled to and positioned on opposing sides of the forward portion of the frame.
4. The motorcycle of claim 3, wherein the forward portion of the frame includes a steering head.
5. The motorcycle of claim 1, wherein the rearward mounting portion extends rearwardly of the fuel tank.
6. The motorcycle of claim 5, wherein the rearward portion of the frame includes a seat pan portion.
7. The motorcycle of claim 1, wherein the mounting bracket is welded to the tunnel wall.

8. A motorcycle fuel tank assembly comprising:

a fuel tank having forward and rearward ends, an inner surface defining a fuel chamber, and an outer surface, the fuel chamber having a first side and a second side, the first and second sides being separated by a tank tunnel portion;
5 and

a mounting bracket coupled to the outer surface and extending along the tunnel portion, the mounting bracket including a forward mounting portion near the forward end of the fuel tank, and a rearward mounting portion near the rearward end of the fuel tank.

10 9. The motorcycle fuel tank assembly of claim 8, wherein the mounting bracket is welded to the outer surface.

15 10. The motorcycle fuel tank assembly of claim 8, wherein the outer surface of the tunnel portion is generally concave, and wherein the tunnel portion receives a backbone portion of a motorcycle frame when the fuel tank assembly is mounted on a motorcycle.

20 11. The motorcycle fuel tank assembly of claim 8, wherein the mounting bracket includes a semi-circular cross-section that substantially corresponds to a curvature of the tunnel portion.

25 12. The motorcycle fuel tank assembly of claim 8, wherein the forward mounting portion includes a first tab extending forwardly of the first side of the fuel chamber, and a second tab extending forwardly of the second side of the fuel chamber.

30 13. The motorcycle fuel tank assembly of claim 8, wherein the tunnel portion is defined in a generally downwardly-facing portion of the fuel tank.

14. The motorcycle fuel tank assembly of claim 8, wherein the rearward mounting portion extends rearwardly of the fuel tank.

15. A method for mounting a fuel tank to a motorcycle, the method comprising:

coupling a mounting bracket to a tunnel portion of the fuel tank, the mounting bracket having a forward mounting portion and a rearward mounting
5 portion;

coupling the forward mounting portion to a forward portion of the motorcycle frame; and

coupling the rearward mounting portion to a rearward portion of the motorcycle frame.

10 16. The method of claim 15, wherein coupling the mounting bracket to the tunnel portion of the fuel tank comprises welding the one-piece mounting bracket to the tunnel portion.

15 17. The method of claim 15, wherein coupling the mounting bracket to the tunnel portion comprises positioning the forward mounting portion to extend forwardly of the fuel tank, and positioning the rearward mounting portion to extend rearwardly of the fuel tank.

20 18. The method of claim 15, wherein coupling the forward mounting portion to the forward portion of the motorcycle frame comprises coupling the forward mounting portion to a steering head of the motorcycle frame.

25 19. The method of claim 15, wherein coupling the forward mounting portion to the forward portion of the motorcycle frame comprises coupling the forward mounting portion to a backbone portion of the motorcycle frame.

30 20. The method of claim 15, wherein coupling the rearward mounting portion to the rearward portion of the motorcycle frame comprises coupling the rearward mounting portion to a seat pan portion of the motorcycle frame.

21. A method for changing the aesthetic appearance of a motorcycle,
the motorcycle including a first fuel tank and a frame, the fuel tank having a first
mounting bracket defining a front mount coupled to a forward portion of the
frame, and a rear mount coupled to a rearward portion of the frame, the method
5 comprising:
selecting a second fuel tank having an outer contour that is different than
an outer contour of the first fuel tank;
coupling a second mounting bracket that is substantially identical to the
first mounting bracket to the second fuel tank;
10 removing the first fuel tank from the frame;
coupling a front mount of the second mounting bracket to the forward
portion of the frame; and
coupling a rear mount of the second mounting bracket to the rearward
portion of the frame.

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